

Expressing displacement in Chaoshan Min: Competition between constructions of different marking strategies

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Like many other varieties of Southern Min, Chaoshan makes use of a broad range of markers and constructions to express displacement or disposal meanings (Matthews and Yip 2008; Chappell 2013), with the head-marking *kai*⁵ *i*¹ construction (1) being relatively distinctive of this dialect cluster; meanwhile, dependent-marking disposal constructions marked with *pa*² (2) and *tsian*¹ (3) (cognates with the Standard Mandarin *bǎ* and *jiāng* respectively), borrowed from the literary layer (Xu 2007), are also attested. A combination of these two types of constructions produces the double-marking construction (4), which may serve to disambiguate between the disposal and benefactive interpretations of *kai*⁵ (Matthews and Yip 2008). Moreover, topicalization (which produces a zero-marking construction) (5) represents another common strategy for expressing displacement.

- (1) *kai*⁵ *p^hij*⁵.*ku*² *kai*⁵ *i*¹ *t^hiak*⁴ *kiŋ*² *tiou*⁵ *suā*³
 CLF apple DIS 3SG stick tight CLF line
 ‘Stick the apple to the line.’
- (2) *pa*² *kai*⁵ *keŋ*¹.*tsie*¹ *paŋ*³ *lo*¹ *iu*⁵ *soi*³ *t^ho¹.i⁵toŋ¹.kaŋ¹*
 DIS CLF banana put LOC more small oval middle
 ‘Put the banana in the middle of the smaller oval.’
- (3) *tsian*¹ *tsek*⁸ *kai*⁵ *bo*¹ *pak*⁴.*p^hue*⁵ *keŋ*¹.*tsie*¹ *paŋ*³ *lo*¹ *tua*⁷
 DIS one CLF NEG peeled banana put LOC big
t^ho¹.i⁵ e⁷.miŋ⁷
 oval below
 ‘Place an unpeeled banana under the big oval.’
- (4) *tsian*¹ *mue*⁸.*kiā*⁶ *kai*⁵ *i*¹ *puā*¹ *zik*⁸ *lai*¹
 DIS thing DIS 3SG move enter come
 ‘Move the thing inside.’
- (5) *siaŋ*⁵.*au*⁶ *tsek*⁸ *kai*⁵ *p^hij*⁵.*ku*² *paŋ*³ *na*⁶ *kai*⁵ *sā*¹.*kak*⁴.*heŋ*⁵ *hə*⁵.*toi*²
 last one CLF apple put LOC CLF triangle inside
 ‘Put the last apple inside the triangle.’

Focusing on the Chenghai dialect of Chaoshan, this study examines the use of various types of disposal constructions, and the competition among them. To this end, we carried out the fruit cart task (Aist et al. 2012; Polinsky 2015) to elicit the production of disposal constructions from native speakers of the Chenghai dialect. At this stage, 30 participants of different age groups have been recruited. As shown in Table 1, the frequency of using the zero-marking construction increases with age, which suggests that this construction type may be losing ground bit by bit despite its dominance at present. Our preliminary results also point to a remarkable increase in the use of *pa*² construction in the younger generations, which is indicative of Mandarin influence. On the other hand, the use of *kai*⁵ *i*¹ construction remains largely stable across generations. This characteristic construction’s resistance to contact-induced change is possibly related to its polyfunctionality (6–7) (see Lin 1996 for further examples) and high frequency in everyday speech, as well as its lack of close counterparts in Mandarin. Overall speaking, the older generations tend to use a narrower range of constructions to express displacement. Provided that stable bilingualism persists in the region, the Chenghai dialect may evolve an increasingly elaborate system for expressing displacement or disposal meanings, in which a clearer division of labour among different constructions may gradually emerge.

- (6) *lui*⁶ *lə*² *kai*⁵ *i*¹ *t^hi*³ *kai*⁵ *t^hau*⁵
 bother 2SG DAT 3SG shave CLF head
 ‘Please shave his head (for him).’
- (7) *ua*² *tsa*² *tsiu*⁶ *kai*⁵ *i*¹ *tā*³-*ku*³
 1SG early then DAT 3SG say-EXP
 ‘I have told him/her before.’

Table 1: The use of various construction types in different age groups

Construction type Age group	Dependent-marking	Head-marking	Double-marking	Zero-marking
13–14	40%	11.43%	0%	48.58%
23–25	42.24%	4.22%	0%	53.52%
31–36	27.27%	1.96%	13.72%	56.86%
47–59	9.79%	6.52%	1.09%	82.61%
≥80	0%	7.89%	0%	92.1%

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Evidentiality across Border: New framework with Case Studies

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Evidentiality is a grammatical category expressing the source of information and the speaker's access to it. This study aims to introduce a new framework for understanding evidentiality, supported by case studies from several languages in China.

Evidentiality is one of the most significant categories in natural languages. The most common evidential types include sensory, inferential, and hearsay. Despite its significance, the concept of evidentiality does not gain enough attention due to its rarity across languages – only about a quarter of the world's language have grammaticalized information source. It was not until Boas (1911) that the modern linguistic community made the first attempt to construct the concept of evidentiality. Aikhenvald (2004), the most important work in the history of evidentiality research, provides frameworks for evidentiality research. Most subsequent evidentiality research follows the direction and standards set by this seminal work. At the same time, some scholars have pointed out the limitations of this theoretical framework (Tournadre & LaPolla 2014, Drolma & Suzuki 2024). Based on the currently collected materials, we propose a new research framework for evidentiality, including new definitions and new classifications:

1) New definition for evidentiality

- a. evidentiality is the grammatical expression of source and access to information according to the speaker's perspective and strategy.
- b. the source denotes where the information originates – from the speaker self or others
- c. the access denotes how the speaker gain the information – via common sense, self-awareness, sensory or inference.

2) Classification of evidential values

Semantic feature	PERSONAL			OTHER
	DIRECT		INDIRECT	
	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL		
Macro-category	Internalized 深知	Sensory 感知	Inference 推知	Hearsay 闻知
Subcategory	–factual –egophoric	–endopathic –visual –non-visual	–inferred –assumed	–reported –quotative

With the new framework, this study presents a series of case studies on Tibetic-type evidential system, Altaic-type evidential system, and mixed type naming the Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund. These case studies reveal the diverse strategies employed by these languages to mark information source and access, ranging from egophoric and factual opposition in Tibetic-Burman languages to indirective evidentials in Altaic languages.

References

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